

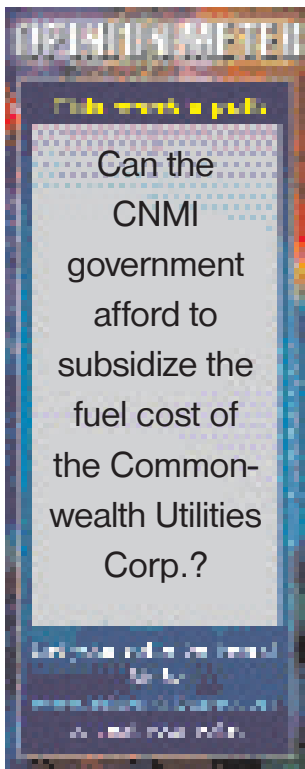
Saipan Tribune

CNMI'S FIRST DAILY NEWSPAPER

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FRIDAY NOVEMBER 26, 2004

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INSIDE



Sweet Treats

Just how much do students appreciate teachers? Marianas High School students answered that question with cakes, cookies, chips, sodas, and many more Tuesday afternoon, providing a special pre-Thanksgiving feast for the staff.

Page 8



Better Times

Nearly one year after it reopened as an elegant restaurant and cozy bar at the heart of the Garapan tourist district on Hotel Street, Neo Remington is looking forward to better times as the government undertakes the multi-million dollar revitalization of the district.

Page 22

'Ready or not, here we come'



A group of Chinese tourists, mostly from the medical profession, enjoy the lobby at the Hyatt Regency Saipan while waiting for the tour guide. Last Wednesday, the tourists went sightseeing around the island.

JOHN RAVELO

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

It may have been dubbed as a three-day vacation but it was still a busy day for Dr. Wang Xiang Dong, a surgeon from the Tong Ren Hospital in Beijing. Together with more than 40 Chinese professionals mostly from the medical sector, Wang has been touring scenic spots on Saipan as part of a getaway package.

"The colors of the sea and the sky give us a deep expression and this island gives us a very peaceful feeling. We get relaxed here," Wang said. "The decoration of this hotel [Hyatt Regency Saipan] is very special, fit for the place near the sea."

He also appreciated the sights of World War II remnants, which he and his group toured earlier that day. In the

afternoon, he said his group dined at a Chinese restaurant at Saipan's premier tourist district, Garapan. "The prices of food, including the hotel, are not much expensive."

Another Chinese surgeon, Liu Ming, said, "Saipan is too beautiful. I like the Bird Island."

With the scheduled signing of the Approved Destination Status agreement

between the Commonwealth and the Chinese government in December, industry players are already expecting the influx of Chinese tourists into the islands. For those who may not have noticed it, though, the Chinese tourists are already here and it will not take long before *huan ying* (Welcome!) and *ni hao* (Good day!) may soon add themselves to the locals' smattering of Japanese and Korean greetings.

See **READY** on Page 4

Budget panel to allocate \$5.1M to retro pay, within-grade increases

By LIBERTY DONES
REPORTER

Members of the conference committee tackling the 2005 budget have agreed to use the projected \$5.1 million in additional revenue to pay off retroactive salaries and within-grade increases of government employees.

Rep. Jesus Attao, a member of the joint budget panel, said during Wednesday's session that they decided to allocate the projected revenues for the unfunded liabilities.

"That's the agreement: to use the \$5.1 million to pay for the within-grade [increase] and retroactive salaries. So that funding has already been reserved," he

said, following suggestions from other House members that the projected income be tapped to pay the government's outstanding debt with the Commonwealth Utilities Corp.

As agreed on by the panel, \$1 million of the amount would be used to pay for Tinian and Rota government employ-

See **BUDGET** on Page 12

It's crunch time on fuel surcharge fee

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. board of directors will decide today whether or not to implement the proposed fuel surcharge amid public opposition and gov-

ernment efforts to bail consumers out of the additional fee.

CUC chair Francisco Q. Guerrero stressed on Wednesday the importance of making a decision before Nov. 29, especially if the utility firm wants to implement the fuel surcharge this calendar year.

A new issue of the monthly Commonwealth Register will be published on Monday. If the CUC board does not give its go-signal before then, the proposed fuel surcharge regulations (which were published last month) would not be in-

See **IT'S CRUNCH** on Page 12

Permanent tenure eyed for NMC faculty, staff

By AGNES E. DONATO
REPORTER

Northern Marianas College is considering a proposal to grant permanent employment to faculty and staff members after a two-year probationary contract.

The proposal, which would provide greater job security for college employees, was presented during the NMC Board of Regents meeting Wednesday. It was favorably received by members of the policymaking body.

Currently, NMC faculty and staff are hired on a contractual basis, with their employment subject to renewal every two years.

"It's a really valid concern that the board should take a look at, especial-

See **PERMANENT** on Page 12

Local

DIABETES
+GREEN

US FASHION
+GREEN

The logo for "Island Snapshots" is written in a stylized, cursive red font with a slight shadow effect.

The Saipan Tribune accepts unsolicited photos of birthdays, weddings, baptisms, and other community and family events for free publication. Material submitted should be original and not copyrighted, in digital or print format. Must include a caption containing complete details (a description of the event, identities of the persons in the photos, the date, and the place), the name of the contributor, and a contact number. The Saipan Tribune reserves the right to edit the captions, the date of publication and the size of the pictures. Contributors can e-mail their submissions to editor@saipantribune.com. To check if contributions are received, call 213-6287, 213-3448, or 213-8743.

Feds to look at CNMI health staff shortage

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

The Department of Health and Human Services intends to make a thorough assessment of the health staffing shortage in the CNMI.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta said he discussed the shortage in his talks with William Hughes in Washington D.C. Hughes is director of the Office Health Care

Program, Office of the Counsel to the Inspector General of DHHS.

“Mr. Hughes expressed great interest in the matter of physician shortage and indicated that he would act on the request as quickly as possible once a thorough background review and assessment is made of the health manpower shortage in the CNMI,” said Babauta.

The request refers to the gov-

ernor’s petition for Hughes’ office to grant Saipan-based Dr. Vicente Aldan a waiver of his exclusion from participation in the federal health programs in the CNMI.

Aldan’s exclusion stemmed from a lawsuit filed against him during his residency in California several years ago.

As such, Aldan, who runs Saipan Health Clinic, can only practice medicine in the Com-

monwealth but he cannot participate in federally funded health programs.

Babauta said Aldan was already allowed by the Office of Counsel to the Inspector General to attend to Medicaid and Medicare recipients in January 2003.

Now, Babauta is requesting Hughes’ office to expand Aldan’s waiver to include all other health care programs that are applicable in the CNMI,

especially those federal health care programs dealing with the U.S. Veterans Administration Tri-Care and CHAMPUS.

“This request, if approved, will alleviate the shortage of physicians here in the CNMI by providing care to patients who

are beneficiaries under these health programs,” Babauta said.

Shortage in physicians and nursing staff is a perennial problem for the CNMI, causing people to constantly complain of poor and delayed delivery of services.

New hemodialysis funding passes both chambers

By **LIBERTY DONES**
REPORTER

Both chambers of the Legislature finally gave the thumbs-up to the additional funding being requested for the completion of the Public Health and Hemodialysis Center on Saipan.

The House of Representatives approved Wednesday the Senate-amended House Bill 14-258, which authorizes the reprogramming of \$5.8 million for the project.

The bill is now up for the governor’s final approval.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta earlier asked the Legislature to reprogram the needed funds, following findings that the project’s original \$11 million-plus funding had been depleted, mostly due to change orders.

“They [House members] approved it mainly because they want it [the project] completed on time,” said House leadership spokesman Charles Reyes Jr.

The House said that, despite the large amount that has already been allocated for the project, it is only about 20- to 40-percent complete. The project is being handled by the Department of

Public Health and the Department of Public Works.

Both chambers recently formed a joint panel to investigate the alleged mismanagement of the project’s funds. The probe extends to contractors, as well as the Attorney General’s Office, which approved the change orders.

Besides the Legislature, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has also begun its audit of the project, as requested by the Executive Branch.

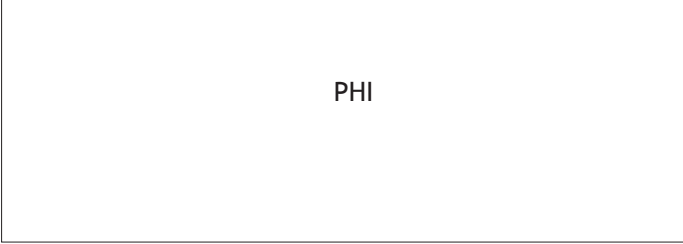
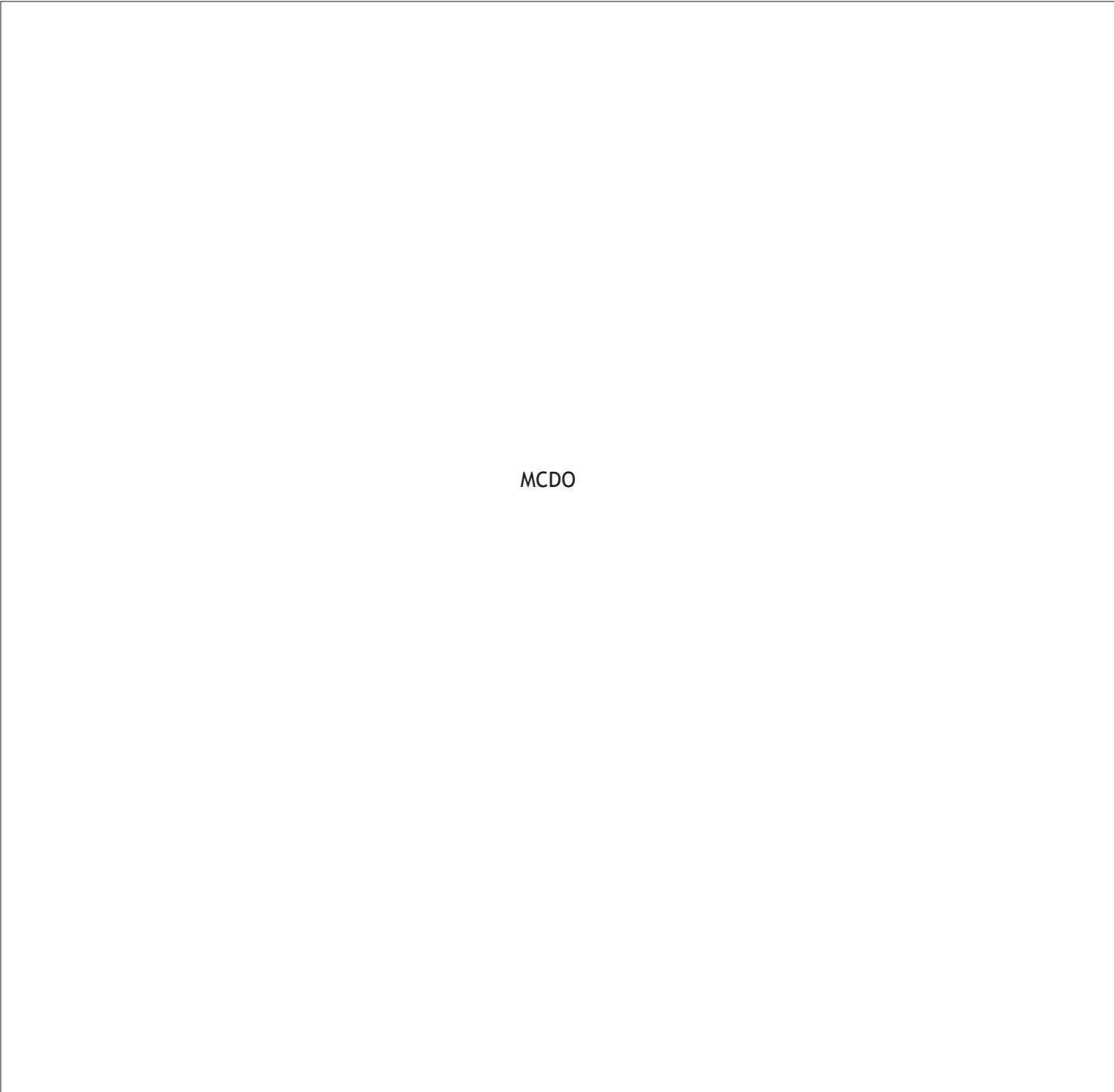
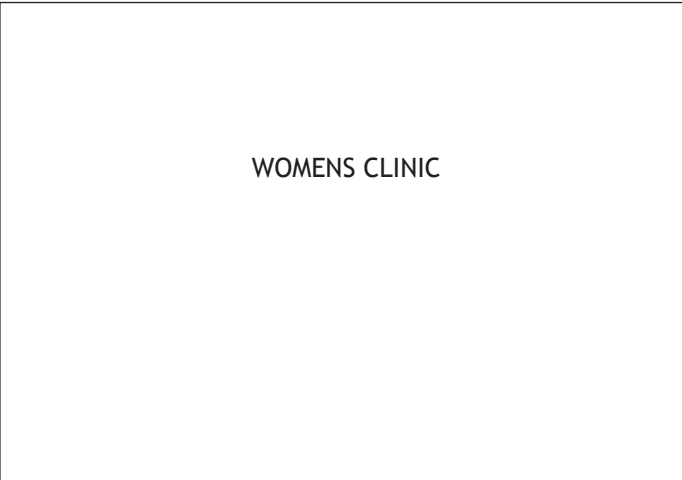
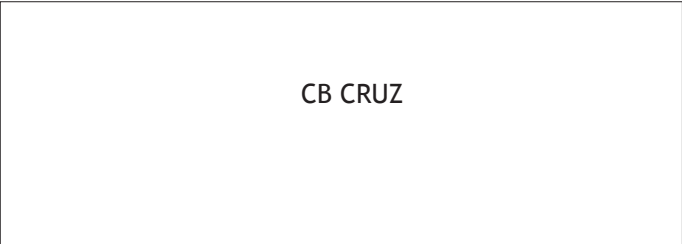
Meantime, the Legislature had formally asked the Office of the Inspector General, Department of the Interior to review the federally funded project.

The Legislature had appropriated \$11.8 million in capital improvement project funds for the project. Of the amount, the DPH awarded a \$5.6 million contract to AIC Marianas to construct the facility. Due to an alleged faulty design, though, the contractor had repeatedly asked for change orders, totaling over \$4 million. About \$2 million had been spent for two architectural and engineering designs. Other expenses reportedly went to administrative activities.

House Vice Speaker Timo-

thy Villagomez, who heads the House investigating panel, has already asked DPW Secretary John Reyes to submit all documents, contracts, correspondences, purchase orders, change orders, and any other information relating to the project imple-

mentation by Dec. 3, 2004.



READY

From Page 1

‘CNMI’s 2nd biggest market’

Even before the ADS agreement is formalized, visitor statistics released by the Marianas Visitors Authority in October show that the number of Chinese visitors are now the second highest among the CNMI’s tourists, next to the Japanese.

Some 3,541 visitors came to the islands that month, 64 percent higher than Chinese arrivals in October 2003. The Chinese total reached 3,541, overtaking the number of Koreans who visited the islands that month. Year-to-date, the number of Chinese tourists who have visited the Commonwealth is nearing the 30,000-mark.

Despite the skepticism by some economists on the potential of the Chinese market, the Pacific Asia Travel Association keeps stressing the importance of China as a tourism market.

In a conference held on Saipan in December 2003, PATA’s Strategic Intelligence Centre managing director John M. Koldowski said that Chinese spending on travels is anticipated to reach \$100 billion by 2008.

Koldowski also noted that there were more departures from China than from Japan in 2002, with over 16 million Chinese traveling outside the country. This phenomenal growth in outbound Chinese travelers is in sharp contrast to the 3.74 million outbound Chinese in 1993. Koldowski said this growth is at a faster pace than that achieved by Japan in decades.

With a population of over 1.2 billion, China’s “super rich” class equates to almost 11 million people. The middle class, which comprises 8.1 percent of the population, earns an equivalent of from \$4,000 to \$12,000. In Australia, Koldowski said Chinese tourists spend an average of A\$5,638 during a visit; in Singapore, S\$498; in Thailand, US\$610.

Koldowski said the Asia Pacific region is clearly one area of growth in world travel, saying that such growth would trickle down to the CNMI.

Tinian Dynasty is optimistic

Although there are no regular flights servicing direct flights between China and the CNMI, the Tinian Dynasty Hotel and Casino, which has been chartering China Southern Airlines to bring in Chinese tourists, disclosed that about 22,720 visitors had come to the CNMI from January to October this year.

The bulk of this total—15,050—came from Guangzhou; 6,500, from Shanghai; and 1,170, from Beijing.

“Once the ADS is approved, it is estimated that Chinese tourists’ arrival to CNMI will increase to 100,000 in the first

year and gradually climb up to 200,000 per year in three years time,” said TDHC general manager Tom Liu.

“The Chinese government allows each citizen to carry a maximum of US\$5,000 for each overseas trip. If each visitor just bring half of that, to CNMI, [this will result in up to] \$250,000,000 being spent in the CNMI [by 100,000 Chinese tourists]. The government will realize at least 15 percent or \$37,500,000 in tax collections through BGRT, hotel occupancy tax, beverage tax, CPA tax, airport arrival/departure fees plus landing fees,” he added.

However, Liu said that, unless more hotel rooms are built on the islands, the maximum number of Chinese tourists should be limited to 200,000 to accommodate these visitors.

Tinian Dynasty charters the China Southern Airlines for two flights weekly from Guangzhou. It partners with Century Tours in chartering two China Eastern Airlines flights weekly from Shanghai. Tinian Dynasty also charters flights from Beijing during long Chinese holidays—the Chinese New Year, and the periods May 1-7 and Oct. 1-7.

The charter flights by TDHC and Century Tours bring in a total of four Chinese flights from China every week.

Unlike Liu’s optimistic projection, however, Century Tours projects Chinese arrivals to reach about 100,000 by 2010.

“Since all flights operate on a back-to-back basis, there could only be a fixed number of Chinese visitors coming to Saipan at any given time,” said Century Tours president David Sablan. “The visitors that arrive on Wednesday return to China on Saturday. The visitors that arrive on Saturday return to China on Wednesday. We anticipate the total number of arrivals from China under the present trend of charter arrangement will be pretty much fixed at about 4,000 per month average or 48,000 to 50,000 arrivals for this fiscal year.”

Sablan said that the annual Chinese arrivals for the next five years will increase at a rate of 10 percent to 15 percent.

“The CNMI must, however, be cautious that the influx of visitors from China does not get out of hand to an unmanageable level. This will be detrimental to the well-being of the CNMI and might even be counter productive,” he added.

Without the charter flights, Chinese arrivals to the CNMI would have been practically zero.

“Thus the charter flights must continue even at the expense of charterers losing millions of dollars each year. There must be subsidy or incentive from the government to encourage charterers to continue to bring in flights until such time that airlines decide to fly the routes on their own,” Liu said.

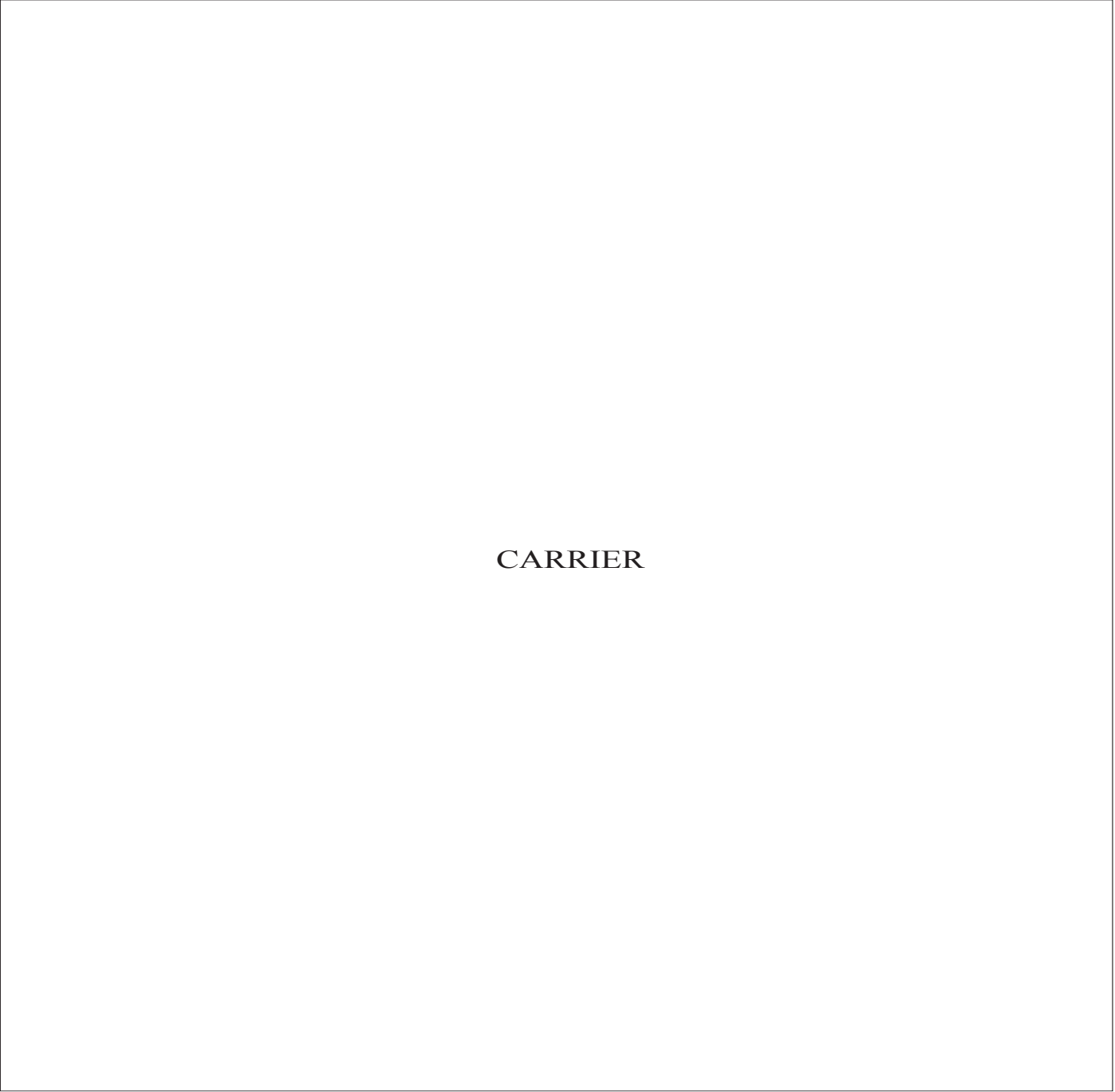
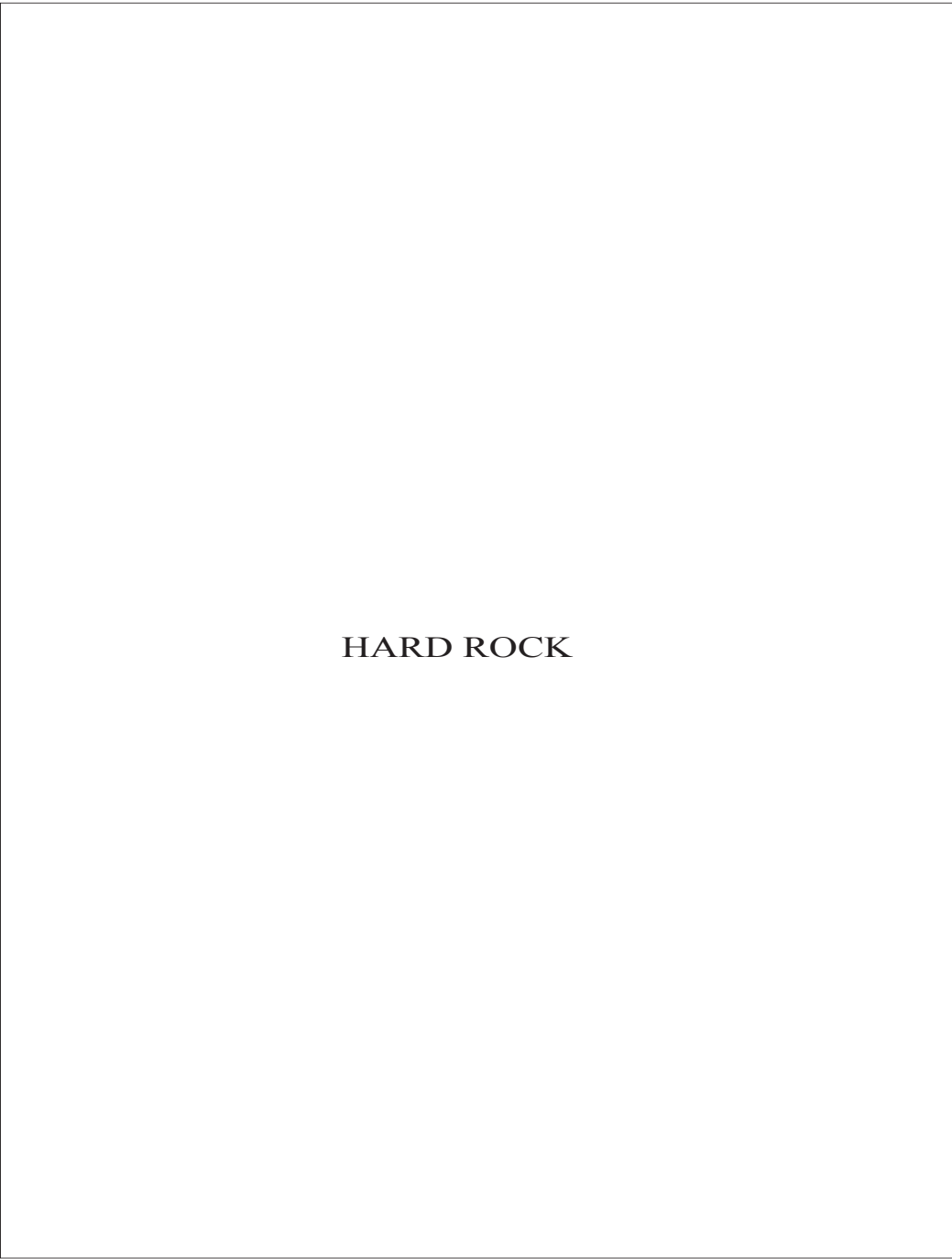
Continental dips

See READY on Page 12

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LOTTERY

PIC THANKSGIVING



ISLA FINANCIAL
+GREEN

ACE

HAMILTON

MHS teachers get special treat

Just how much do students appreciate teachers?

Marianas High School students answered that question with cakes, cookies, chips, sodas, and many more Tuesday afternoon, providing a special pre-Thanksgiving feast for their educating staff.

“We felt that our teachers need to know that we appreciate them, even though sometimes it seems like we don’t,” said Student Council president Marvin Tamangided. “Its our way of saying thank you for everything.”

The Student Council organized a special competition between all four classes—senior, junior, sophomore, and freshmen.

“Whoever can make the best table presentation, wins,” he said.

Tamangided said goods were purchased with funds generated from fundraisers and donations from students.

The senior class ended up as victors in the competition; however, physical education teacher Bobby Winkfield and the rest of the school’s staff lauded all students for their generous effort.

“I think this is great,” Winkfield said. “It just shows that the students do appreciate us and what we try to do, and it’s a good feeling to see that they’re appreciative.”

Senior class officers Divana



Senior class officers Divana Dela Cruz, Andrew San Nicolas, and Sherry Ann Songsong pose in front of a table of sweets and other goodies.

SHAN SEMAN

Dela Cruz, Andrew San Nicolas, and Sherry Ann Songsong, for their part, expressed their appreciation to the school’s staff, relating the event to the meaning of Thanksgiving.

“It’s going to be Thanksgiv-

ing, so it’s a good time for us to show our teachers that we do appreciate them and we’re giving thanks for having them,” Dela Cruz said.

The school currently has 61 teachers and 19 staff members

serving 1,284 students. Teachers and other Public School System personnel were all honored Wednesday during the celebration of Education Day at the Kagman Elementary School. *(Shan Seman)*

GUANGDONG

AGO files another case of sex abuse of a minor

The Attorney General’s Office filed with the Superior Court Wednesday another case of sexual abuse of a minor.

Prosecutors charged 23-year-old Eric Lizama of sexually abusing a 14-year-old girl.

Lizama allegedly had sex

with the victim on at least two occasions in July and August earlier this year.

The charges against Lizama include two counts each of sexual abuse of a minor in the second degree and disturbing the peace.

Also last Wednesday, the AGO, in a separate case, lodged similar charges against 30-year-old Melvin Dela Cruz for victimizing another teenager aged 16. Dela Cruz’s alleged victim was only 15 years old when the alleged sexual abuse happened

in November 2003 and May 2004. Additionally, the AGO charged Dela Cruz with two counts of assault and battery for having sexual contact with the victim without the latter’s consent. *(John Ravelo)*

USS PALELUI

LOTTERY

DRINKING WATER WARNING

CUC Saipan Water is Contaminated with [*E. Coli*]

BOIL YOUR WATER BEFORE USING

E. Coli bacteria was found in the water supply on October 18, 19, 26, 28, 29 and November 1, 9, 10, 11 and 12. These bacteria can make you sick, and are a particular concern for people with weakened immune systems.

What should I do?

- ❑ **DO NOT DRINK THE WATER WITHOUT BOILING IT FIRST.** Bring all water to a boil, let it boil for one minute, and let it cool before using, or use bottled water. Boiled or bottled water should be used for drinking, making ice, brushing teeth, washing dishes, and food preparation **until further notice**. Boiling kills bacteria and other organisms in the water.
- ❑ *Fecal coliforms and E. Coli are bacteria whose presence indicates that the water may be contaminated with human or animal wastes. Microbes in these wastes can cause diarrhea, cramps, nausea, headaches, or other symptoms. They may pose a special health risk for infants, young children, some of the elderly, and people with severely compromised immune systems.*
- ❑ The symptoms above are not caused only by organisms in drinking water. If you experience any of these symptoms and they persist, you may want to seek medical advice. People at increased risk should seek advice about drinking water from their health care providers.

What happened? What is being done?

Bacterial contamination can occur when increased run-off enters the drinking water source (for example, following heavy rains). It can also happen due to a break in the distribution system (pipes) or a failure in the water treatment process.

The CUC Water Division is increasing the monitoring to determine where the contamination is coming from and they are closely monitoring the chlorination stations to ensure proper disinfection of the drinking water. We will inform you when tests show no bacteria and you no longer need to boil your water. We anticipate resolving the problem within a week.

For more information, please contact CUC's Water Manager Jesus Castro or Management Specialist Pamela Mathis at 235-7025, or the CUC Lab at 322-5140, or you may write to them at P. O. Box 501220 CK, Saipan, MP 96950. Questions that relate to the CNMI Drinking Water Regulations may be addressed to Joe Kaipat of the Division of Environmental Quality. He may be reached at 664-8500.

Please share this information with all the other people who drink this water, especially those who may not have received this notice directly (for example, people in apartments, nursing homes, schools, and businesses). You can do this by posting this notice in a public place or distributing copies by hand or mail.

This notice is being sent to you by CUC. State Water System ID#: MP000001.

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Opinion

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The price gouging stupor

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Letters to the Editor

Azmar’s worst nightmare

READY

From Page 4

into China

Continental Micronesia vice president for sales and marketing Wally Dias said the air carrier has begun offering travel packages between Guangzhou and Saipan via Hong Kong.

This development came with the launching of direct flights between Hong Kong and Saipan earlier this month. He said Continental began looking at Hong Kong and Guangzhou as travel markets several months ago in anticipation of the ADS approval for the CNMI.

Dias also said Continental would look into the possibility of providing charter services.

"If we can find additional demand, we will consider increasing the flights," Dias said. "We're pleased with what we've seen so far."

Currently, the markets meet Continental's expectation of 75-80 percent of the 310-seating capacity per week. In Hong Kong, Dias said Managaha Island instantly became popular among travelers.

Dias said, however, that Continental would not be offering direct flight services between China and Saipan, considering the cold bilateral ties between the United States and China.

Despite this, Commonwealth Ports Authority executive director Carlos Salas is still optimistic that regular scheduled flights would service Saipan and China directly by next year.

Salas said China Southern Airlines has submitted an application with the U.S. Department of Transportation to service Tinian, Guangzhou, and Shanghai.

"I believe there were discussions for direct flights from Beijing," Salas said. Northwest Airlines, Salas said, has begun servicing China and the U.S. mainland.

Despite the anticipated increase in Chinese arrivals, Hyatt Regency Saipan said it is not gearing up for the market at this point when no regular flights service China and the CNMI.

Its present clientele, according to general manager Michael von Siebenthal, come from Hong Kong and Taipei, except for a group of mostly medical doctors who arrived earlier this week from Shanghai.

Once regular flights become available, however, von Siebenthal said Hyatt could easily tap into the China market, saying there are currently seven Hyatt hotels in the Asian country. "The Chinese public knows Hyatt."

CNMI gets ADS

Anticipating the ADS approval by the Chinese government, the MVA invested some \$500,000 earlier this year to prepare for full-blast marketing of the CNMI as a tourist destination.

The MVA has tapped the services of public relations firm Ruderfinn, an American company based in China, to be its marketing arm in separate offices in Beijing, Shanghai, Guangzhou, and Hong Kong.

Within the Commonwealth, the MVA's board members recently conducted inspections of different sites on its three major islands—Saipan, Tinian, and Rota—to assess the condition and help maintain the sites' conditions, asking the Division of Parks and Recreation to carry this out.

Century Tours' Sablan, who is also chairman of the MVA board, disclosed that the authority has been working with various agencies to prepare the islands for increased Chinese arrivals, such as the inclusion of the Chinese language in public signages and the use of international traffic signs.

"The trend in Chinese arrivals into the CNMI is expected to grow significantly....The arrival numbers for fiscal year 2004 as compared to FY 2003 showed positive double-digit growth, and we anticipate the trend to continue for at least the next two to five years," said MVA managing director Vicky Benavente.

Benavente estimated that Chinese arrivals would reach about 50,000 by the end of FY 2005, nearly double the 29,238 total registered in FY 2004.

In early October this year, China's National Tourism Administration informed the CNMI of the ADS approval, although the status remains unofficial to date until an official agreement is signed by the CNMI government and China's State Council.

Benavente said the signing of ADS documents were originally scheduled in November, but the event had to be postponed due to China National Tourism Administration chair He Guang Wei's trip out of China. She said the official signing has been tentatively set for mid- to the latter part of December.

"The official document will be signed in Beijing between our government officials and China's," she said.

Gov. Juan N. Babauta said he invited U.S. Department of Interior assistant deputy secretary for insular affairs David Cohen to attend the ceremony.

Is the CNMI ready?

The question that needs to be asked now is: Is the CNMI ready for the Chinese tourists? Anecdotes circulating among hotel personnel have already identified two potential barriers: cultural and linguistic.

"They're arrogant. They don't know any English," said a hotel employee at one of the top hotels on island.

At least two guests did not pay their phone bills, claiming that they did not use the services from their hotel rooms, narrated the employee, who spoke on condition of anonymity. "Everything at the hotel has a system. The phone calls came from their rooms," the employee insisted.

The employee noticed the increase in Chinese tourists staying at their hotel beginning July, when these guests occupied about 30 to 40 rooms weekly. Before this period, the employee said Chinese tourists only occupied about three to five rooms a week.

The employee also encountered language barrier problems. She could not speak Chinese; the guest could not speak in English.

"If you don't understand Chinese,

some of them would laugh at you," the employee claimed.

An employee working at the Saipan International Airport lamented the alleged mess left by some Chinese guests before departing after being stranded by supertyphoon Chaba.

"One just left used baby diapers in one corner, while leftover food was scattered," the airport worker said. "There were trash bags that they did not use."

What needs to be done

"We have to learn the culture of our visitors to learn to cater to them accordingly. What we might see as 'arrogance' might just be natural behavior to others. Let's learn to adjust and we will all get along with one another. As stated earlier, we should bring in Chinese guides to work with us. This solves the problem we are facing," said MVA's Sablan.

Sablan said the CNMI government should allow the hiring of Chinese speaking workers who would serve the China market.

Even during the PATA conference last December, Koldowski already anticipated language barrier and cultural differences as problems. He gave several tips on how to deal with Chinese tourists, saying that besides learning Chinese, tourist attractions must perform well beyond the clients' expectations because of the importance of "word-of-mouth" in the Chinese culture.

"Chinese would prefer sincere attitude rather than casual style—for example, greeting them always by last name if possible, with their title like 'General Manager'. This shows their status and gives them 'face,'" he said.

"The manner of the speaker is considered more important than the content, so one needs to inject sufficient flattery and protect everyone's face. The Chinese are traditionally suspicious of 'foreign devils' so work hard at creating trust," he added.

Many Chinese love shopping and dining, he said. However, they don't like Western food much. "For break-

fast, they are more comfortable with traditional food items like congee, noodles or steamed buns."

TDHC's Liu said major infrastructure development would have to be done to upgrade existing tourist sites. Development of theme parks, water parks and other recreational facilities should also be encouraged, he said.

"Additional restaurants and upscale shopping centers are minimum needs to provide variety of activities for the visitors to do and places to go during their stay," Liu said.

For MVA's Benavente, her agency would begin conducting exit surveys among Chinese tourists to better understand their expectations and satisfaction level in their visit to the islands. The survey will boost information relayed by travel agents that Chinese tourists enjoy sightseeing, the beaches, diving, shopping, and most especially, dining.

Benavente also disclosed that the CNMI would participate in the World Travel Fair in Shanghai this January.

"We are planning travel agent seminars in partnership with MVA members in order to disseminate information about our tour products, destination attractions, hotels, etc," Benavente said.

"Our competitive advantage includes the fact that we will be a fairly new and exciting destination to these travelers. The U.S. label is another added value to our destination, and the fact that we are able to actively promote and advertise once the ADS signing has taken place, will greatly help in getting our message out to millions of potential visitors," she added.

Even before these plans are implemented, Dr. Wang, the surgeon from Beijing, indicated he was impressed with the natural beauty that Saipan has to offer.

"I have heard the name Saipan, but I didn't know the exact conditions here. When I came, nature's beauty here is a deep expression," Wang said. "If I have a friend who wants to travel, I will introduce him here."

PERMANENT

From Page 1

ly because it has been brought up more than once. I think employees deserve to have that peace of mind, instead of making them go through the renewal process every two years," said NMC chair Kimberlyn King-Hinds.

During the board meeting, faculty regent Danny Wyatt noted that some faculty members are having difficulty applying for loans and long-term plans due to their lack of tenure.

He also said a two-year probationary period should be enough for the college

to determine which employees are assets or liabilities to the institutions, as well as for faculty and staff to form an opinion on NMC as an employer.

For her part, King-Hinds said the board will try to tackle the proposal more thoroughly in its next meeting.

Giving job security, she said, is the least NMC could do for its employees who have not received any salary adjustment for years now.

"I can't even remember when we last gave a salary increase to anyone. We adopted a salary compensation policy in 1989, but we have not been able to implement it due to lack of funding

from the [central government]," she said in an interview.

Meanwhile, she said, the Board of Regents and the college administration will continue to lobby the Legislature for more money not just for additional full-time employees, but also for the existing staff.

Further, efforts will continue toward the reinstatement of a performance evaluation program for college employees, she said. "That program will provide us the tools to measure if an employee is really serving the students and worth keeping around," King-Hinds said.

BUDGET

From Page 1

ees' retroactive pay. The remaining amount would be reserved for the within-grade increase.

The Babauta administration had initially submitted a proposed \$226-million spending plan for fiscal year 2005. It later submitted additional funding of \$5.1 million that it expects to raise from two revenue enhancement measures that were recently passed into law. This is the money that the joint panel wants to go to the retroactive and within-grade increases.

Rep. Arnold I. Palacios explained that the within-grade increase is not a

new salary hike but a debt that needs to be paid now. He said the within-grade increase has been suspended for all government employees except the nurses and police personnel.

"It's not a new wage increase. It's been suspended for several years now for lack of government funds. We're paying what's due them [government employees]," said Palacios.

Meanwhile, the conference committee has agreed to use the \$217-million funding level for fiscal year 2005 as approved by the Senate, in view of the additional \$5.1 million in anticipated revenues.

The House earlier approved only \$212.7 million out of the \$226 million requested by the administration. The

House had rejected the administration's Integrated Fiscal Plan, which aims to generate some \$13 million from increased fees and taxes.

Meantime, the joint committee has asked the Attorney General's Office to explain the nature of the projected \$1.5 million revenues that the administration expects to raise from the \$50 increase in labor fee for nonresident workers.

The committee said it would not be able to consider the additional projection because it is unclear whether it is a fee or a tax.

The Department of Labor implemented the \$50 hike last July, increasing the legislated labor fee of \$225 without legislative approval to \$275.

IT'S CRUNCH

From Page 1

cluded for adoption and therefore could not be implemented.

If this happens, CUC will not have a chance to publish the adopted regulations until another issue of the Commonwealth Register is put out in late December. Further, once the notice of adoption is published, CUC will have to wait another 10 days before it can implement the fuel surcharge.

Under this scenario, it is likely that the whole process would not be completed until January 2005.

Since the law prohibits CUC from adjusting the fuel surcharge during the first calendar year of implementation, customers would be assured that they would not be charged more than 3.5 cents per kwh for the entire 2005.

On Wednesday, the CUC board members agreed to hold another meeting at 2pm Friday to finally decide on the proposed fuel surcharge.

Guerrero, along with vice chair Herman Sablan and treasurer Allen Perez, maintained that time is running out on the fuel surcharge issue.

"I think everyone understands the seriousness of our cash flow situation. There are only so many areas we can cut back on....At this point, we have to take the worst-case scenario: What if no one comes to our rescue?" Perez said.

However, board member Velma Ann Palacios said it may be too soon to make a decision.

She said CUC has not done enough to convince the public how much it needs the 3.5-cent fuel surcharge. She pointed out that, while the public was able to come up with numerous cost-cutting measures for CUC's consideration, the utility firm itself seems to lack an alternative action plan to solve its problems.

"I feel we're just sitting back and letting others find the solution to problems," Palacios said.

Newly confirmed CUC board member Martin Mendiola also expressed reservation about making a decision on the fuel surcharge proposal. All the information he has got so far about the fuel surcharge comes from the media, he said.

"This is a very serious issue that will impact even our own pocket. I understand we have a fiduciary responsibility to keep the solvency of the corporation, but we can't hastily make a decision," Mendiola said.

For his part, board member Joe Torres agreed that CUC must make a decision, instead of allowing the time to simply lapse.

Nevertheless, he insisted that the CUC administration should present different action plans under various scenarios such as a possible government subsidy, among other things.

Letters to the Editor

Secret meetings of the MPLA board and Azmar

It boggles the mind that the board of directors of the Marianas Public Lands Authority has the gall to engage in “strategy” meetings at the exclusion of the opposition. This very decision (on a highly explosive issue) exacerbates the fire of suspicion from A to Z.

The MPLA ought to review the meaning of the concept “sustainable development” if only to avail itself of the opportunity to engage in listening and protecting the pristine beauty of home for those who were born and raised on Pagan. Their sentiments didn’t spin out of thin air. Thus, their painful decision to fight every inch of the way to

guard it from exploitation and subsequent destruction.

“Sustainable development has been defined as development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs.” This is the very issue being implemented today by the United Nations in an effort to bring harmony between mankind and its environment.

The Saipan lagoon is a perfect example of continuing negligence and man-associated destruction of fish habitat and pollution of beaches where tourists and residents gather for a day in the sun.

Furthermore, I associate myself with Mr. Gus Litulumar’s recent expression of the concept of “listening” to the very people we represent. The 16th president of our country remains the most revered for his ability to listen to his people in both good and bad times. He remains the top researched leader by management gurus all over the world for his success as a leader. He did one thing and one thing for sure: He listened to his people, especially families of soldiers killed in battlefields. Hello, anybody home?

John S. DelRosario Jr.
As Gonna

SAM

Open letter to the Governor, Lt. Governor

I think I speak a lot for our people when I say that it is really frustrating to follow up on the tax rebate that was supposed to have come out since the end of October. I have tried so many times to call the Tax & Revenue office but to no avail. You can let it ring 20 or 30 times and still no one is there to answer your call. Is there anyone working there? And if there are, then why do they just turn a deaf ear to their phones? Hello...phone etiquette. Don’t you feel cheated by people turning in their time sheets, claiming to work and you paying them yet they’re not there to answer the phones

or even take their time to attend to customers? Or when they do answer the phones, surprisingly, the answer is always, “the computer is down.” Don’t you have technicians to fix that? How long does it take them for them to do that? Maybe they really are doing their work and have burned down the computer. That will be a big surprise if you answer yes to that.

On child tax, isn’t that federal money? If it gets approved, why is it taking too long for them to print it? Are you guys trying to get money from that too to pay for whatever debt is here on our debt-ridden island?

To sum it all up, when are our rebates coming out? Thanks-giving has come and gone and Christmas is coming up and believe me, a lot of us can use that money. Do we have to write you a letter first? Do we have to have connections first? People meet the deadline of April 15 so I think it’s just fair to let you do your end of the bargain and meet the deadline of Oct. 31st, or if not, a lot soon afterwards.

By the way, good luck trying to call Tax & Revenue to find answers to your questions.

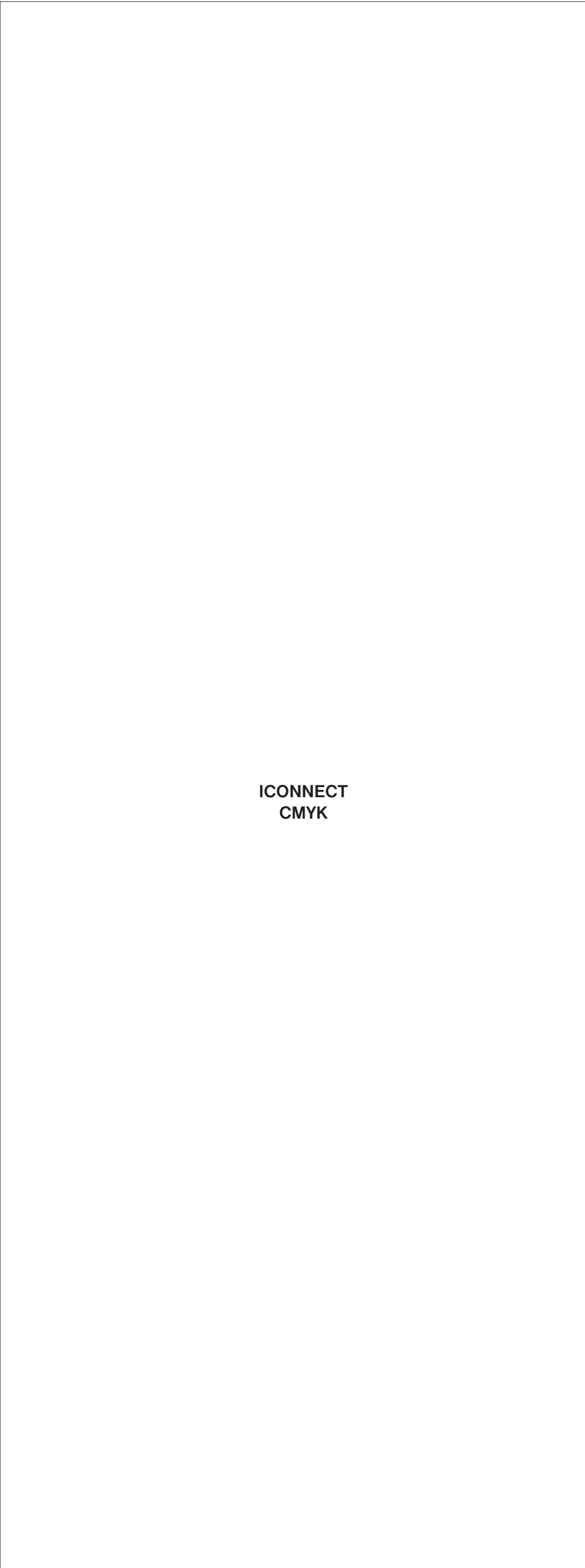
Lucy L. Rosario
Kannat Tabla, Saipan

PTC CHAMBER



HYUNDAI
CMYK

Business



ICONNECT
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shell thanksgiving

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Neo Remington looks forward to better times

By JOHN RAVELO
REPORTER

Nearly one year after it re-opened as an elegant restaurant and cozy bar at the heart of the Garapan tourist district on Hotel Street, Neo Remington is looking forward to better times as the government undertakes the multi-million dollar revitalization of the district.

This early, Neo Restaurant manager Mika Isayama said the establishment would soon reopen the café after the expected completion of the road improvement at Hotel Street in a few months.

Isayama said the business has survived and has been doing well since it reopened as

Neo Remington last March 1—a major facelift from the old Remington Club.

“We’re not closed. Nothing changed,” Isayama said. Marianas Sunrise Enterprises, led by its president Takahashi Toshihiro, owns the establishment.

Under Isayama’s management, she said Neo Remington would enhance its restaurant service, saying the establishment would adapt to its guests’ demands. Besides local residents, Japanese, Korean, and Chinese tourists also frequent Neo Remington, she said.

“I want to emphasize that Neo Remington is not only a bar; we are also a restaurant,” she said. “I want to include more local



JOHN RAVELO

Neo Remington’s private room is equipped with its own sound system, comfortable sofas and its very own washroom.

food for local people and new cuisine for tourists.”

An artificial falls, complemented by strategic lighting, welcome guests to the foyer of the restaurant. The restaurant itself, with its minimalist interior, provides a cozy ambiance, offering a large airy space, exquisite Japanese furniture and the soothing sight of an aquarium.

Neo Remington also has a private room equipped with its

own sound system, comfortable sofas and private washroom. Isayama said the private room is not only good for parties but also for business meetings.

Neo Remington also has a segregated gameroom for those who want to play billiards and darts.

Neo Remington is located nearly across the Dai-Ichi Hotel Saipan Beach. It opens its doors to guests Tuesdays through Sundays.

Verizon starts off holidays with after-hours sale today

Verizon will be having its second After-Hours Sale today, Nov. 26, from 6pm to 9pm, at the Chalan Laulau customer service center in Middle Road. This is the place where you want to be if you are looking for great deals and free gifts.

For interested prepaid cellular users, the Kyocera 2235 and the Modotel will be on sale for an unbeatable \$59.99. These packages include a \$10 calling card, a car charger, and a leather case.

“Accessories will be provided while supplies last so be sure to be there early to avail of these great deals,” Verizon said in a statement.

For those who are tired of their existing cell phones and would like to trade them for new units, they can bring in their cell phone with the wall charger and replace it with either the Kyocera 2235 or the Modotel for only \$49.99. A \$20 prepaid card will also be included with this package deal.

“Your phone does not have to be in working condition to avail of this reduced rate. Just bring your unit in and Verizon will offer you a phone that is right for you,” the company said.

Unlike the rest of the deals happening during the event, the popular Kyocera Slider cell phone will be on sale throughout the day for only \$145.95, beginning at 8am until 5pm. The special rate for the Kyocera Slider will resume during the after-hours sale so cus-



tomers can drop by to get a phone during the promotional event if they do not have time to come in during regular working hours. Some conditions apply for this phone unit.

Although this is not a camera phone, this dual-band CDMA phone is Kyocera’s first model with a sliding form feature. It also has a 65,000-color display, has voice dialing capabilities, and has a speaker-phone.

Anyone who buys a cell phone will receive a free gift during the evening. In addition, they will also have a chance to win a \$100 prepaid cellular calling card through Verizon’s putt for minutes game.

“Verizon continues to offer world class communications to the islands in a friendly Micronesian way. Be in on the action and get the coolest phones out in the market at Verizon tonight,” the statement adds.

For more information on the promotion or if you would like to find out about other Verizon products and services, call 234-7143 or visit www.vzpacifica.net.

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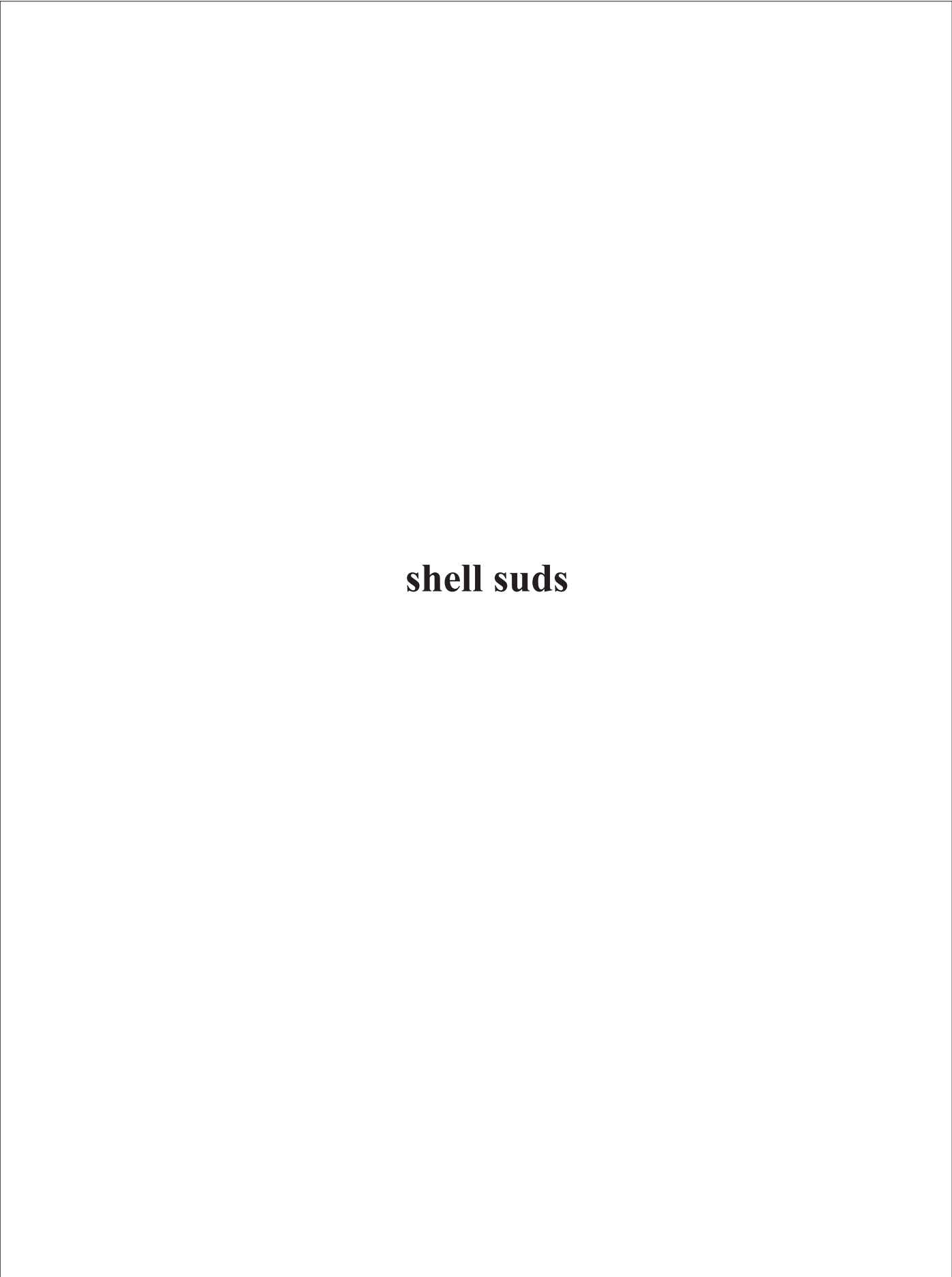
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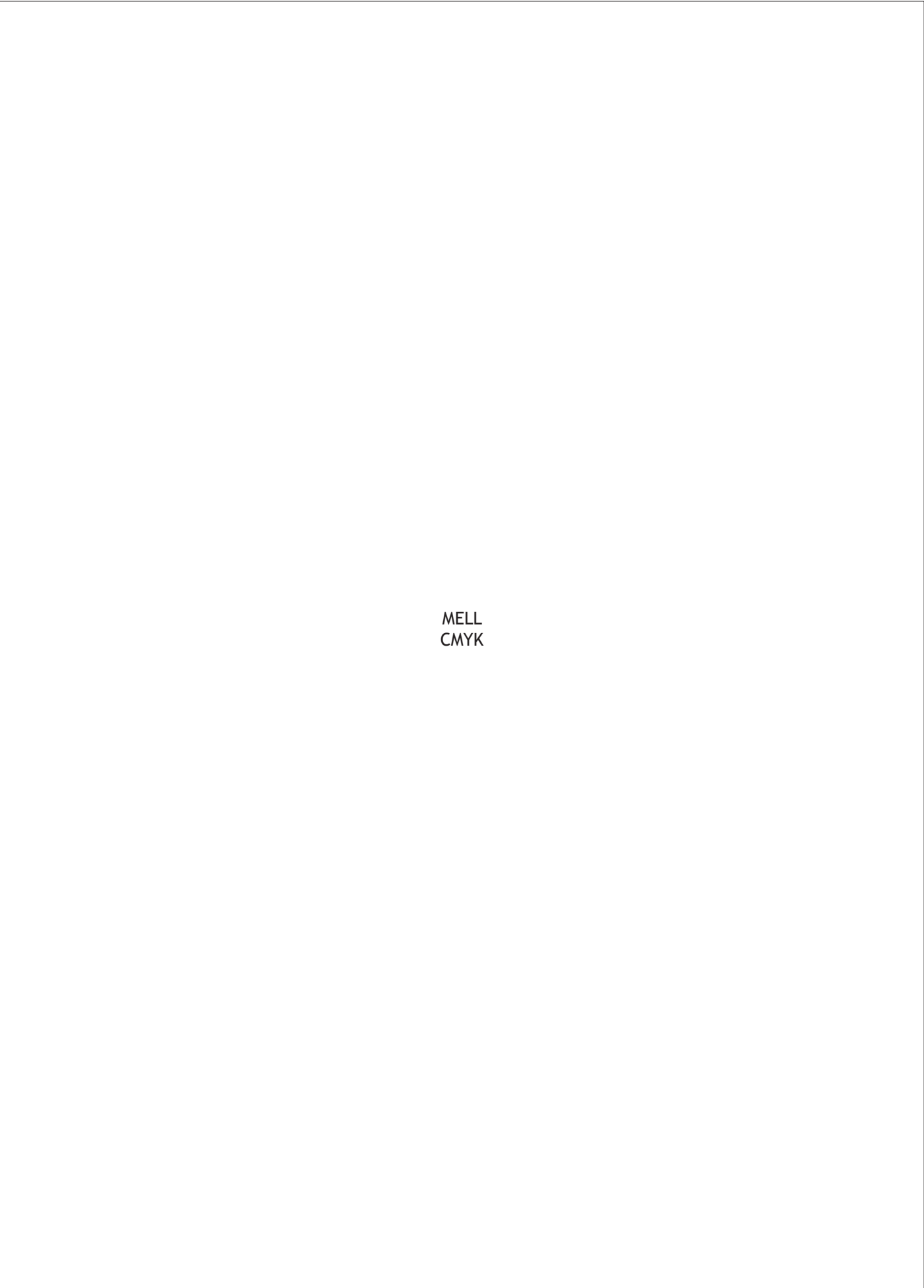
shell visor
cmyk



JOETEN MOTORS
+BLUE/RED



Life & Style



“When great visuals are combined with great music, the effect is nothing short of magic. Next time you’re at the theater, don’t just watch—listen. You may be opening yourself up to a whole new world of enjoyment at the multiplex.”



By JOE WEINDL
Special to the
Saipan Tribune

WALLACE



Alexander—not so great



Two loads of laundry. Six episodes of *Seinfeld*. Four games of “John Madden Football.” A 20-mile bike ride and a bubble bath. There are so many things I could’ve done instead of watching *Alexander*. I don’t mind so much the \$4.50 I coughed up; the wasted time, however, I’ll never get back. Oliver Stone’s latest movie, chronicling the life of the “great” Greek conqueror, is a failure of epic proportions. It’s boring. Sore-butt-three-hours-long boring.

In *Alexander*, the title character, with the singular vision of a zealot, completes his daddy’s unfinished business, traveling east to spread “freedom” through imperialistic conquest. Hmmm... sounds oddly familiar.

The biggest setback in *Alexander* is that there’s absolutely no emotional attachment to any of the characters. When he finally dies, at the tender age of 32 (sorry folks, can’t rewrite history), instead of the moment being sad or poignant, it’s more like, “Okay. Don’t care. My butt hurts.”

At first, I couldn’t figure out why I didn’t care about *Alexander*, considering how terrific a job Colin Farrell (*Phone Booth*, *Minority Report*) did in the starring role. After a little thought, my best guess is that the problem is in the structure of the story. Most stories have a traditional three-act arch, in which

the conflict builds until the climactic finale. *Alexander* has no main conflict to resolve, no villains per se, and it never feels like it’s ever going anywhere. It’s basically just a dramatized history lesson.

For the most part, the acting is good in *Alexander*. In addition to Farrell’s performance, Val Kilmer (*Batman Forever*, *The Doors*) is convincing as the alcoholic and abusive father, King Phillip; Anthony Hopkins (*Hannibal*) is very nice as the narrator, and Jared Leto (*Panic Room*, *Fight Club*) is okay, if not great, as Alexander’s “life partner” (yep, there’s some man-lovin’ goin on).

Angelina Jolie (*Tomb Raider*, *Gone in 60 Seconds*), on the other hand, takes her performance way over the top, well beyond the realm of ridiculous. She plays the role of Alexander’s mom, Olympia, as if she were stuck in a soap opera, and for some reason, speaks like a vampire. I never knew Greek accents sounded so Transylvanian.

It’s been a long time since Jolie showed herself to possess any talent, and I think the only reason she gets cast in anything is the fact that she has a pair of big, beautiful, silicone-infused lips. Oh, you didn’t think I was gonna say something

else did you? Shame on you.

Anybody hoping for a remake of *Gladiator* will be truly disappointed. Besides the fact that *Gladiator* has boatloads more emotion, it is obviously driven by some of the coolest action sequences in Hollywood history. The action in *Alexander* is short-lived, and confusing. On a side note, you might be as glad as I am to know that DreamWorks is producing an actual *Gladiator 2*, to be directed again by Ridley Scott, scheduled for release in 2006. How rad is that?

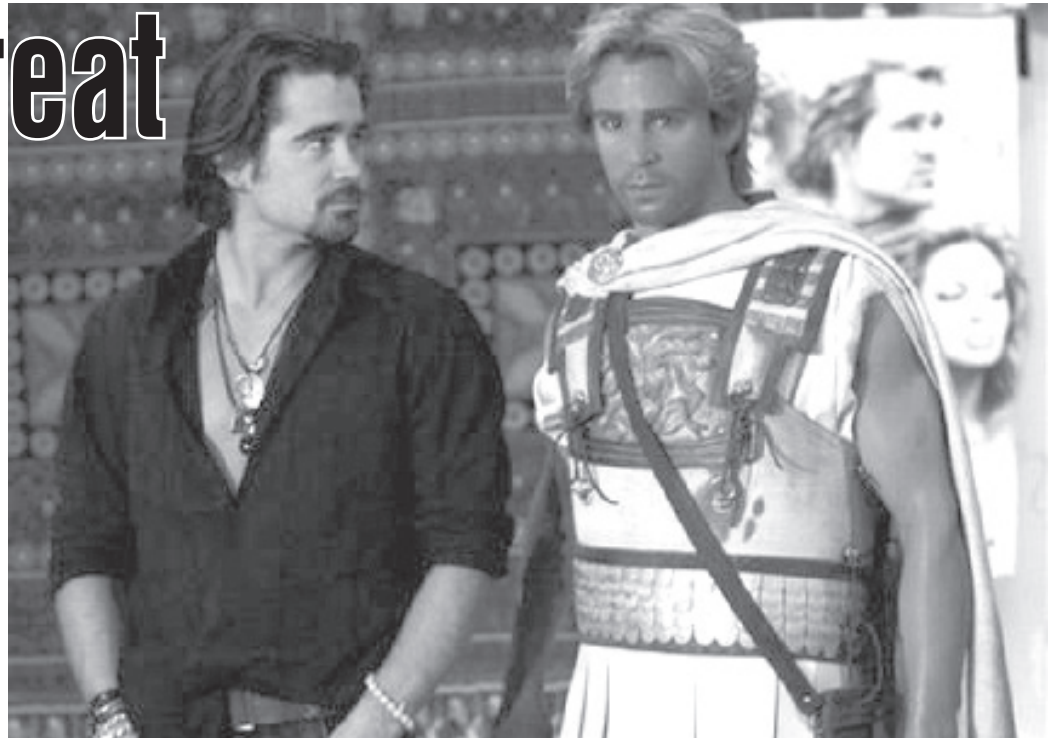
Alexander isn’t for the easily offended. There are buckets of blood, two rapes, and a gratuitous full-nudity “love” scene between Farrell and Rosario Dawson (*The Rundown*, *MIB 2*). Homophobes might want to stay home, too. Alexander swings both ways, but he seems to really prefer dudes over chicks. Oh, and I almost forgot to mention the fact that Alexander appears to have a serious Oedipus complex. Ewww!

The only thing that kept Joe slightly entertained during *Alexander* was how the king occasionally referred to himself in the third person. Joe thought that was funny.

The crappy icing on the crappy cake comes in the form



By **JOE WEINDL**
Special to the
Saipan Tribune



Colin Farrell, left, meets a wax figure of his character from the movie “Alexander”, on display at Madame Tussauds in New York, Tuesday Nov. 23, 2004. AP

of the horrendous soundtrack by Greek composer Vangelis (*Blade Runner*, *Chariots of Fire*). The entire movie is done on a synthesizer. Aaghh! Stone can spend more than \$150 million on a movie, but can’t afford a live orchestra? Joe angry.

Oliver Stone was meticulous in his recreation of a world more than 2,000 years past. All of the little details, from costumes to cultural practices have obviously been well researched. So, at least we can give him some credit for making *Alexander* a reasonable period piece. Too bad it’s just not very entertaining.

Comments? E-mail Weindl at joe_watchesmovies@yahoo.com.

Nirvana’s box set finally released

SEATTLE (AP)—After years of legal tussling, Nirvana’s much-anticipated box set is finally introducing hundreds of thousands of fans to rare recordings and even living-room video of the groundbreaking grunge rockers.

“With the Lights Out” includes 81 tracks, 68 of them previously unreleased. It was initially planned for release in 2001—the 10th anniversary of the album “Nevermind”—but a dispute between Courtney Love, widow of the late Nirvana frontman Kurt Cobain, and the surviving bandmates delayed the project. The sides resolved their issues in September 2002, allowing work on the box set to resume.

The set, which came out Tuesday, features three CDs, beginning with a Led Zeppelin cover recorded in 1987, and a DVD of rare performance and rehearsal footage—including nine songs rehearsed at the home of bassist Krist Novoselic’s mother when Cobain was only 20. The DVD also includes the first performance of “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” the song that launched Nirvana and Seattle’s grunge scene onto the national stage in 1991.

“It is a true Nirvana fan’s

dream,” said Seattle disc jockey Andrew Harms, whose station devoted an entire weekend to the rare tracks. “You get to see how the band progresses. The whole box set tells a story, and it goes all the way to the end.”

Cobain biographer Charles Cross agreed that the set, from Universal’s Geffen Records, tells Nirvana’s story well—a story that ended with Cobain’s spiraling heroin use and suicide in 1994.

“It’s not always a pretty story,” he said. “The band wasn’t always pretty, or always in tune. This is not Nirvana unplugged. It’s Nirvana unedited.”

Seattle music writer Gillian Gaar first heard Nirvana when she was reviewing a Sub Pop Records compilation album in the late 1980s. She was so unimpressed she didn’t bother to mention the band in her piece, though she discussed almost every other song on the compilation.

That changed when she heard the band’s first album, “Bleach.” She wound up becoming a major fan - and would later spend six years working on the box

set, tracking down rare recordings and helping create a 60-page accompanying booklet.



A pedestrian walks past a picture of Kurt Cobain on a mural of the cover the Nirvana box set “With the Lights Out,” on the wall of a record store in Seattle Tuesday, Nov. 23, 2004. AP

“I started working on it in 1998 and never imagined it would take six years,” she said. “We were working with a 2001 release date, for the 10-year anniversary of Nevermind. Then

the lawsuits happened. All this work we had done was put on hold, and we thought, ‘Are we ever going to get back to this?’”

Novoselic and drummer Dave Grohl wanted to release the box set earlier, but Love disagreed, arguing that a best-of-Nirvana CD should come out first. They wound up in court, but settled; the box set was delayed to make way for the best-of disc.

Gaar found the final product satisfying, but sad.

“The DVD starts with them in this little room rehearsing, then at the end they’re again in a little room rehearsing,” Gaar said. “There seems to be an underlying sadness coming through. That was part of the soul of the band in a way, that there was always a melancholy bittersweet feeling running through their music. Even the title, ‘With the Lights Out,’ seems to me to be a little sad.”

The title comes from “Smells Like Teen Spirit,” which includes the refrain: “With the lights out/ it’s less dangerous/ here we are now/ entertain us.”

WALLACE

Mom is embarrassed by what her snooping daughter found

By ABIGAIL VAN BUREN

DEAR ABBY: I'm a single mother, raising a 14-year-old daughter, "Cheryl." Recently, Cheryl has started going through my things while I am not at home. A couple of times she has found things of a sexual nature—pictures and marital aids—that I had thought were well hidden.

How do I address these matters without discussing the content in depth? We have discussions about a lot of things, but I must admit I'm embarrassed about this. However, I want to discuss this with Cheryl before she tells someone about what she found and gets misinformation.



Dear Abby

BLUSHING IN CHICAGO

DEAR BLUSHING: Your daughter is old enough to understand the concept of privacy—and that includes not going through your things without permission, or discussing your private life with her contemporaries. Since you now know what she does in your absence, keep your personal items under lock and key.

If Cheryl questions you about the items she found, explain to her that they are sometimes used by adults. If she wants to know more, answer her questions honestly. And while you're at it, be sure your daughter knows that if she has further questions in the future, she's welcome to come to you with them, and you will be sure she gets correct answers.

□ □ □ □ □

DEAR ABBY: I'm having trouble dealing with my Aunt "Marge." She disapproves of the fact that my husband, "Keith," is 40 and I'm 33. Aunt Marge says I should have married someone my age—or no more than a year or two older—because SHE likes men her own age. Also, SHE prefers dark-haired men, so she keeps asking me why I married a blonde.

Keith earns enough so that I can stay at home with our two children. Aunt Marge says I'm selfish to make him carry the financial burden alone. (Neither Keith nor I feel there's anything selfish about it.) What's peculiar is, Aunt Marge has always been a homemaker. She hasn't worked a day since she married Uncle Steve. Also, she constantly asks my husband if he's saving the money he earns, and what we do with it.

Aunt Marge stops by unexpectedly a lot, usually at night. If I'm wearing my robe and nightgown, she demands to know why. Then she asks why I took my shower so long before bedtime. She also constantly criticizes the way I wear my hair.

Aunt Marge gets upset because, when Keith is home, we screen our calls. I've explained that it's to avoid telemarketers, but if we don't pick up, she says in a rude tone, "I don't want to leave a message. Pick up the phone NOW!"

Abby, she's a good person in other ways, but she has always had a habit of criticizing and being too quick to judge. Do Keith and I have reason to be offended, or should we just accept that she is who she is, ignore her, and not say anything?

GETTING FED UP IN CALIFORNIA

DEAR FED UP: If no one has pointed out to Aunt Marge that it's rude to ask people what they do with their money, to drop by unannounced, to give unsolicited advice about personal grooming, and to demand instant gratification when she calls, now is the time. It won't change her, but perhaps it will cause her to stop for a moment and think.

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

For everything you need to know about wedding planning, order "How to Have a Lovely Wedding." Send a business-size, self-addressed envelope, plus check or money order for \$5 (U.S. funds only) to: Dear Abby, Wedding Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. (Postage is included.)

'Sex and City' star forced to cover up

JERUSALEM (AP)—It looks like Sarah Jessica Parker is too sexy for some Israelis' tastes.

A poster and billboard campaign showing the "Sex and the City" actress in a skimpy, sequined dress was quickly replaced with new ads of her in a dress that covered her arms, back and thigh, reportedly after ultra-Orthodox consumers objected to her outfit.

The sexy ads promoting Lux soaps had begun appearing on billboards across the country in recent days. But after an angry phone call from a prominent rabbi, the consumer goods giant Unilever quickly gave Parker a more modest wardrobe, the Haaretz daily reported.

Ultra-Orthodox Jews, who require women to dress modestly, account for roughly 10 percent of the Israeli population, making them a sizable market for local Unilever products.

A spokesman for Unilever Israel said Wednesday the wardrobe was altered—just days after the posters first appeared—to be more suitable for the arrival of winter in Israel.

"The winter came suddenly. Last week it was summer. Now it's rainy and cold. Everyone has the flu," said the spokesman, who declined to give his name.

He said company officials were unavailable to discuss the reported complaints by religious Jews.

Incubus singer guilty in knife case

NEW YORK (AP)—Incubus' lead singer pleaded guilty to disorderly conduct and was fined \$250 for carrying a switchblade in his bag while trying to board a plane.

Brandon Boyd, 28, said Tuesday he bought the switchblade while he was in Amsterdam and brought it back in his suitcase. Later on, he went camping with his family and brought the blade



A cosmetics billboard advertisement of Sarah Jessica Parker, of the cable television show "Sex in the City," in Tel Aviv, Israel, Tuesday Nov. 23, 2004. The top billboard shows Parker wearing a more revealing dress, while the bottom shows workers changing the billboard to more modest attire.

with him in his toiletry bag and forgot about it.

"I had finally found a use for it: Camping," he said. "I totally forgot about it in my bag."

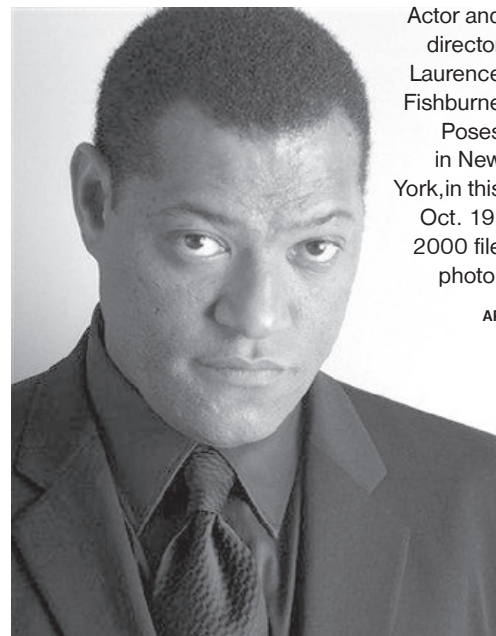
Boyd was stopped U.S. Airways terminal at LaGuardia Airport when baggage screeners spotted the knife in his carry-on luggage.

Boyd was charged with criminal possession of weapon and

was released after four hours in a holding cell. The charges were later reduced.

Incubus, the rock band formed in 1991 in Calabasas, Calif., has produced five albums and achieved chart success with hits such as "Pardon Me" and "Drive," which reached the Billboard Top 10 in 2001. The band has a new album, "Live at Red Rocks," scheduled for release Nov. 23.

Fishburne, Hawke to co-star in thriller



Actor and director Laurence Fishburne poses in New York, in this Oct. 19, 2000 file photo.

AP

DETROIT (AP)—A grim, crime-ridden city co-stars with Laurence Fishburne and Ethan Hawke in a thriller movie set for release in January.

"Assault on Precinct 13" is a remake of the 1976 cult classic directed by John Carpenter, which was set in Los Angeles. The 2005 version, set in Detroit, is directed by Jean-Francois Richet ("All About Love"), and also features Drea de Matteo, Maria Bello, Gabriel Byrne and Brian Dennehy.

The movie tells the story of a stormy New Year's Eve at a police precinct that is set to be shut down in a few days. Crime lord Marion Bishop, played by Fishburne, sits in Precinct 13 for the night. When a gang attempts to break in to free him, the prisoners and a skeletal crew of police officers realize they must band together if they want to make it out alive.

"Assault on Precinct 13" was shot almost entirely in Toronto. A skyline shot is the only glimpse of the real Motor City, the Detroit Free Press said Tuesday.

The film is set to open Jan. 21.

Ellen hooks up military with cruises

LOS ANGELES (AP)—For relatives and friends of U.S. troops serving in Iraq, "The Ellen DeGeneres Show" was the place to be. Studio audience members, all with a military connection, were surprised with the gift of a free cruise at a taping Tuesday. The episode of the syndicated talk show, with guest Tom Hanks, aired Wednesday.

A total of 250 seven-day cruises for four, along with taxes and fees, were given in appreciation of troops deployed from three California bases: Marine Corps Air Station Miramar, Camp Pendleton and Fort Irwin.

Celebrity Cruises is providing the vacations, available at any time to allow for troops overseas to take part on their return, according to a spokeswoman for the show.

DeGeneres also joined with the USO to send more than 5,000 care packages to the audience's relatives and friends in Iraq. The episode will be repeated on Thanksgiving on the Armed Forces Network.

2 Live Crew show leads to trouble

SONOMA, Calif. (AP)—A beer garden that usually hosts polka bands may get fined after a raunchy performance by 2 Live Crew.

The Nov. 18 rap concert, which featured explicit lyrics, partially nude lap dancing and simulated sex acts, was attended by undercover agents from the California Department of Alcohol and Beverage Control, The Sonoma Valley Sun reported.

The agency may fine the owners of Little Switzerland, which advertises itself as a 1920s style European beer hall, or suspend its alcohol license, according to investigator Scott Warnock.

The 2 Live Crew was not specifically targeted, Warnock said.

A show scheduled in nearby Guerneville for Nov. 20 was canceled after the Little Switzerland incident.

The beer hall's owners, Antonio and Alina Garcia, were unavailable for comment.

In 1986, 2 Live Crew released its first album and a Florida record store owner was charged with obscenity for selling it to a 14-year-old girl. He was later acquitted.

The band's legal troubles escalated and 2 Live Crew grew notorious for its sexually explicit lyrics and live performances.

In 1990, a Florida state court declared its third and most successful album, "As Nasty As They Wanna Be," legally obscene. That ruling was later overturned by the U.S. Supreme Court.



Pastimes





TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

SPORTS TRANSACTIONS

MLB
HOUSTON ASTROS-Fired Jimmy Williams, manager; Burt Hooton, pitching coach; and Harry Spilman, hitting coach. Named Phil Garner manager, Jim Hickey pitching coach, and Gary Gaetti hitting coach.

NBA
ATLANTA HAWKS-Signed C Jason Collier.
BOSTON CELTICS-Re-signed C Mark Blount to a six-year contract.
CHARLOTTE BOBCATS-Signed G Jason Hart and F Tamar Slay.
DALLAS MAVERICKS-Re-signed G Marquis Daniels to a five-year contract with a team option.
DETROIT PISTONS-Signed F Antonio McDyess to a four-year contract with a team option and G-F Carlos Delfino to a three-year contract with a team option.
GOLDEN STATE WARRIORS-Re-signed C Adonal Foyle to a six-year contract.
LOS ANGELES CLIPPERS-Traded F-C Melvin Ely and G Eddie House to Charlotte for 2005 and 2006 second-round draft picks.
LOS ANGELES LAKERS-Traded C Shaquille O'Neal to Miami for F Lamar Odom, F Caron Butler, F-C Brian Grant and a future first-round draft pick.
MEMPHIS GRIZZLIES-Signed F Brian Cardinal to a six-year contract.
MILWAUKEE BUCKS-Signed C Etan Thomas to a six-year offer sheet.
PHILADELPHIA 76ERS-Signed F Brian Skinner to a multiyear contract.
PHOENIX SUNS-Signed G Quentin Richardson to a six-year offer sheet. Signed G Steve Nash to a six-yr contract.
SAN ANTONIO SPURS-Re-signed F Bruce Bowen. Signed G Beno Udrih.
TORONTO RAPTORS-Signed G Rafer Alston to a five-year contract.
UTAH JAZZ-Signed F Carlos Boozer and C Mehmet Okur to six-year offer sheets. Re-signed G Carlos Arroyo to a four-year contract.

NFL
GREEN BAY PACKERS-Voided the trade of DE Jamal Reynolds to Indianapolis after Reynolds failed his physical and waived him.
NEW ENGLAND PATRIOTS-Released S Jason Perry.

PHILADELPHIA EAGLES-Signed G Adrien Clarke to a four-year contract and LB Jeremiah Trotter to a one-year contract.

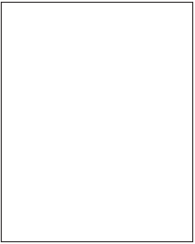
Olympics
U.S. OLYMPIC MEN'S ROAD CYCLING TEAM-Announced Levi Leipheimer will replace Lance Armstrong.

College
AUBURN-Named Casey Dunn assistant baseball coach.
DARTMOUTH-Named Maribel Sanchez Souther women's cross country coach.
EVERGREEN STATE-Named Kim Farnsworth athletic trainer.
HOUSTON-Named John Severance women's tennis coach.
N.J. CITY-Named Bridgette Quimpo softball coach.
NORTH DAKOTA STATE-Named Eric Viney women's assistant volleyball coach.
NORTHWESTERN-Announced men's junior basketball F Bernard Cote will transfer from Kentucky.
OKLAHOMA-Named Bill Pink director of women's basketball operations.
PALM BEACH ATLANTIC-Announced the resignation of Chris Bizol, men's and women's tennis coach, to take a position with Texas-Tyler.
RHODE ISLAND-Announced the resignation of Boe Pearman, women's basketball coach.
SANTA CLARA-Named M. Felipe Montoro assistant cross country coach and Steve Drake women's assistant basketball coach.
SETON HALL-Named Gerson Echeverry men's assistant soccer coach.
SKIDMORE-Named Darren Bennett women's basketball coach.
ST. FRANCIS, PA.-Named Wylie Crisanti women's lacrosse coach.
TULSA-Named Christy Connoyer softball coach.
WRIGHT STATE-Named Rob Cooper baseball coach.

By The Associated Press

LOCAL SCORES

RESTAURANT LEAGUE STANDINGS		
Angel Wings	3	0
Country House	3	1
Jollibee	3	1
Capricciosa	2	1
Keeraku	1	2
LSG Sky Chefs	0	3
El Segundo	0	4



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